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REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE

Letter dated 1 July 1991 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Netherlands to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit the text, in English and French, of the Declaration of the European Council on improvement of emergency assistance within the United Nations framework, issued on 29 June 1991 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under items 12 and 85 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Jan de MARCHANT et d'ANSEMBOURG
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* A/46/50.

ANNEX

Declaration on the improvement of emergency assistance within the United Nations framework, issued by the European Council on 29 June 1991

The European Council expresses its deep sympathy for the victims of catastrophes on an international scale, including the recent cyclone in Bangladesh, the crisis in the Horn of Africa and the massive exodus of Iraqi refugees from their country.

The Community and its member States have responded to these catastrophes with substantial aid programmes to assist the victims. They have a responsibility to ensure that their aid is channelled as directly and efficiently as possible. The European Council invites the member States and the Commission to pursue the implementation of their emergency aid programmes and to draw the lessons of the experience acquired in this regard. The European Council believes that in the light of experience it is essential to strengthen the coordination mechanisms for emergency actions undertaken within the United Nations.

To this end, and without prejudging other reforms of the United Nations Secretariat, the European Council recommends that appointment of a high-level coordinator for emergency humanitarian aid.

With the authority of the Secretary-General behind him and enjoying direct access to him in New York, and with the confidence of donor countries and organizations involved in emergency aid, it will be the task of the Coordinator to set up and maintain, on the political and administrative level, the links, impetus and direction needed to ensure that aid missions proceed smoothly. This strengthened coordination will be carried out in Geneva and should involve all humanitarian agencies within the United Nations system - without excluding specific links with other agencies not belonging to this system - as well as non-governmental organizations active in this field.

In particular, it would be the task of the coordinator to:

- Chair an inter-agency standing committee based in Geneva which would coordinate assistance efforts and provide a meeting point for donors and would include representatives of all humanitarian agencies, with a standing invitation to the ICRC and ICM;

- Have direct access to a future emergency fund enabling an immediate initial response to be made to international catastrophes;

- Maintain an up-to-date register of all the resources available within the United Nations framework, States and non-governmental organizations for mobilization at short notice in different emergency situations.